

Houston **Bikeway** Program

# Bikeway News



Spring 2007

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## Biking to Work

Are you catching the cycling spring fever and thinking of riding your bike to work? Before you do, read these tips from cycling commuters Jason Holoubek (City of Houston), and Woody Speer (EOG Resources).

**Jason:** I am a Senior Planner for the Neighborhoods Section of the City of Houston Planning & Development Department. Prior to that I was a data analyst in Austin.

**Woody:** I'm Manger of Internal Audit for EOG Resources, Inc. I've been a Houston resident since 1987. I started riding in 2000 to prepare for the MS 150. Prior to that, I hadn't ridden in 12 years.

### Why do you ride?

**Jason:** I find bicycle commuting to be cost and time efficient. My trip to work on my bike is quicker than by bus, and only a few minutes slower than by private vehicle.

When you include the fact that I get about 45 minutes of daily exercise built in, and therefore don't need to go drive to a gym, it's a real time and money saver.

*"Work"...Continued on page 2.*



*The newly formed City of Houston Employee Bike Team, (l-r) Andrea Chang, LGL; Joel Alba, PWE; Wolf Guentbert, PWE; Lilibeth Andre, PWE; Luther Villagomez, CEF; Gray James, HAS. Team members who also rode the Guaranty Bank Tour de Houston but not pictured : Corpening, Jerry, HFD; Jason Holoubek, PDD; Frank Michel, MYR; Will Chavez, IT; and of course our Mayor Bill White.*

## Employee Bike Team

This year, City of Houston employees got together and formed a bike team to ride in this year's Guaranty Bank Tour de Houston for the first time.

Employees signed up from various departments and rode in

the 20-mile, 40-mile and 70-mile loop around the city earning points

*"Team"...Continued on page 4.*

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**Woody:** The main reason I ride is the health benefits for cardio and weight control. My bike commute from Meyerland is a 21-mile round trip. It gives me an extra 1000 calorie-per-day burn because my commute time becomes my exercise time. I'd rather be cycling at 16 mph than riding the brakes on a freeway.

### **How long have you been commuting by bike?**

**Jason:** I have been doing it for over a year now. I rode my bike to work at my previous job, so for me the decision was easy. In addition to commuting to work, I ride around the Heights a lot, especially the White Oak Bayou Trail.

**Woody:** I started commuting in 2003 when they started the light rail construction and Main Street was car free. The time to commute by bike is so predictable. It's normally 45-50 minutes each way by bike and only the wind makes a difference. The time variation with taking the bus or driving can be anywhere between 35 minutes to an hour, traffic dependent. I also ride the MS 150 every year and occasionally run errands on a bike.

### **How did you identify your route?**

**Jason:** Trial and error, mostly.

**Woody:** I'd always ridden the Brays trail down to Hermann Park and then discovered that the road behind the zoo and Caroline, down to Alabama, was a nice cycling route into downtown. San Jacinto, with its four lanes leading into downtown is easy to cycle on.

### **How have you prepared to ride?**

**Jason:** I prepare by saying a few Hail Mary's and keeping my Will updated



*Mayor Bill White (green T-shirt) leads off 3,000 cyclists at sunrise in the Guaranty Bank Tour de Houston 2007. He was joined by Mrs. White, Council Members Carol Alvarado, District I; Toni Lawrence, District A; Ron Green, At-Large Position 4; and Senator Rodney Ellis. (photo by Richard Carson. See more tour photos at: [www.tourdehouston.org](http://www.tourdehouston.org).)*

regularly. No, seriously, riding in Houston isn't any different from other cities I have ridden in (of course, I've only lived in Texas). You prepare by having a well-maintained bike and the proper equipment. How I decide which days to ride depends mostly on the weather. I don't like to ride in the rain, or in the summer.

**Woody:** I took the League of American Bicyclists (LAB) Road 1 class several years ago and that gave me an added boost of confidence to ride on Houston streets. I still avoid streets that have posted speed limits in excess of 35 mph. The speed differential between my speed and





## Top 10 Tips

Here are the *Watch For Cyclists!* **Top 10 Tips** to help motorists and cyclists share the road.

### TIP NUMBER 1:

#### **Watch for Cyclists before driving out.**

When starting your car, look in every direction before driving out to avoid collisions.

### TIP NUMBER 2:

#### **Watch for Cyclists using sidewalks.**

A cyclist can use a sidewalk in a residential area. They can also use the sidewalk if the road presents a hazard.

### TIP NUMBER 3:

#### **Watch for Cyclists especially at night.**

At night or dusk, a cyclist can disappear in reduced distances. Be alert! As a cyclist, use lights, reflectors and bright clothing. Be seen! Kids can be unpredictable day or night and may not control their bicycle well. Keep in mind that a child on a bike may appear unnoticed above the hood.

### TIP NUMBER 4:

#### **Watch for Cyclists sharing the road.**

The same rights and rules apply to cyclists on the road. Check your blind spots for cyclists. Check your mirrors and turn to verify that you are clear to move before maneuvering.

### TIP NUMBER 5:

#### **Watch for cyclists at intersections.**

When reaching an intersection, look in each direction. Make sure bicycles are not approaching your path. Avoid collisions. When reaching a 4-way stop, allow the first vehicle to cross the intersection first.

### TIP NUMBER 6:

#### **Watch for cyclists before turning right.**

When making a right-hand turn, use your mirror to check for approaching cyclists from the rear. If a cyclist is on your right, slow down and allow them to pass before making your turn.

### TIP NUMBER 7:

#### **Watch for cyclists when passing.**

When passing a cyclist on the road give a minimum of 3 feet to avoid windraft that can drag the cyclist towards traffic. Use a passing lane when possible.

### TIP NUMBER 8:

#### **Watch for cyclists before turning left.**

When making a left turn, check for on-coming cyclists and allow them to pass. Cyclists can travel as fast as 25-30 miles per hour and can reach you faster than you think.

### TIP NUMBER 9:

#### **Watch for cyclists and slow down.**

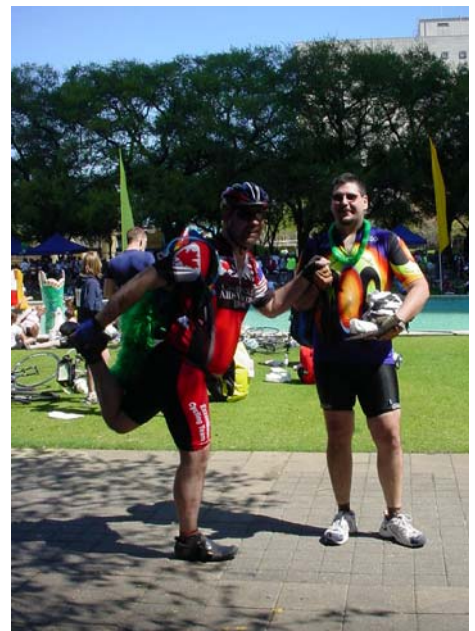
Speeding reduces your ability to see what is on the road. It also reduces your response time. Maintain the speed limit and keep the road safe for everyone.

### TIP NUMBER 10:

**Watch for Cyclists before opening your door.** Check your mirror before opening your car door. An unexpected open door can cause serious injury to a cyclist.

*“Work”...Continued from page 2.*

the car's speed is what concerns me most. The most important fact is to stay visible, always assume the car doesn't see you and ride accordingly. I use a rack and secure my back pack with two tie-downs to avoid a sweaty back. I use a mountain bike with front shocks and use the 1.5" high pressure Armadillo commuter tires that have a thick layer of kevlar. I only get one or two flats per year with these tires. I use a rear blinker and a removable Cat-Eye LED light for the front, and wear a reflective flashing vest when I'm commuting in the dark. I normally commute by bike when I find those perfect mornings as defined by dry pavement and a morning temperature of 65 degrees or less. Its never too cold to bike commute in Houston; only too wet or too hot. My employer EOG Resources, Inc. is "Going Green". They are in the process of installing employee showers. This will give employees the opportunity to ride year-round.



*The Guaranty Bank Tour de Houston brought out a variety of cyclists and a green tail-feathered bird on a migration route to Houston from Canada. A unique sighting by a local birder.*

I'm still driving in or taking the bus on those wet days. This bike commuting is not an all or nothing decision. My goal is to ride in two or three times per week.

**What do you recommend to new commuters?**

*“Work”...Continued on page 4.*

## Guaranty Bank Tour de Houston 07

3,000 Participants  
Popular Loop - 70-miles  
Oldest Cyclist - 90  
Youngest Cyclist - Toddler  
12 Crates of Bananas Consumed  
12 More of Oranges  
4 First Aide Calls  
80 Teams  
Michelob Ultra Team Winners

**"Team"**...Continued from page 1.

towards the corporate challenge competition won by the Michelob Ultra team.

The Tour offers riding opportunities for all riders as they tour across the city in an urban ride that features various Houston sights of the city. This year, the Tour featured central and southeast Houston as riders rode Downtown to Lawndale and Navigation for the 20-mile loop. Cyclists riding the 40-mile loop continued from Lawndale to Old Galveston Highway and turned at Ellington Field to return to Downtown; and those that swooshed through on to the 70-mile loop continued to Clear Lake, making a rest stop at UH-C, before returning to Downtown.

Representing the City of Houston (COH) bike team in the Guaranty Bank Tour de Houston were the following employees:

Joel Alba, PWE – 40 miles  
Lilibeth Andre, PWE – 20 miles  
Andrea Chan, LGL – 40 miles  
Will Chavez, IT – 70 miles  
Jerry Corpening, HFD – 20 miles  
Terrance Fontaine, MYR – 40 miles  
Wolf Guenther, PWE – 40 miles  
Jason Holoubek, PDD – 40 miles  
Gray James, HAS – 40 miles  
Kevin McDonald, PWE – 20 miles  
Frank Michel, MYR – 70 miles  
Luther Villagomez, CEF – 70 miles  
Mayor Bill White, MYR – 40 miles

Other employees who signed up for the COH employee bike team but who were unable to ride in the Tour are:

Carlos Macias, BSD  
Karl Pepple, MYR  
Donald Perkins, PDD  
James Tanner, PWE  
Anna Thomas, HHS

We also want to recognize our

elected officials for participating and riding in the Tour. Leading the Tour and the employee team was Mayor Bill White. Also riding were Council Members Carol Alvarado, Ronald Green and Toni Lawrence. Senator Rodney Ellis joined us for his third Tour.

Apologies to any employees who rode in the Tour but were not included on the list. City of Houston employees can sign up to join the employee bike team by calling (713) 837-0003 or by emailing [lilibeth.andre@cityofhouston.net](mailto:lilibeth.andre@cityofhouston.net).

Join your company bike team and enter the Bike Month Corporate Challenge. Participants will qualify to attend the Bike Month celebration party at the Galleria, on June 1, 2007, and enter to win great prizes. **B**

**"Work"**...Continued from page 3.

**Jason:** It seems like just in the last year I have noticed more people commuting by bicycle. I usually see two or three other bike commuters on my way to work. Even though most people don't do it themselves, I think the vast majority of Houstonians view it favorably. As far as anyone considering riding for transportation, I would recommend they start out with short trips within their neighborhood. They will need a Houston Bikeway Network map of course. Now is an ideal time to start, before it starts to get really hot.



Jason Holoubek, a City Planner, bikes to work.

Other than that, I would tell them to go out there and have fun, and to remember that flat cities are ideal for riding!

**Woody:** Due to the number of cyclists, I would say that Houston is becoming more aware of cyclists, especially in the downtown area and inside the loop. If you want to start commuting by bike, plan your route well. Ride in on a Saturday morning to get a feel for whether a particular route would work for you. Be sure and invest in flashers and lights. I see way too many cyclists riding at dusk or dark with no lights. In addition, take the LAB Road 1 class and get with someone who is currently bike commuting in and join them on their route. **B**

## Bike Parking

Visit [www.houstonbikeways.org](http://www.houstonbikeways.org) and choose the Bicycle Parking link.

## Bike Month

*-Bike Month Kick-off*  
Tuesday, May 1, 2007  
[www.houstonbikeways.org](http://www.houstonbikeways.org)

*-Bike Month Corporate Challenge*  
Bike to Work day, Friday May 18  
[www.houstonbikeways.org](http://www.houstonbikeways.org)

*-Bike Month Celebration Party*  
Galleria, Friday, June 1, 2007  
[www.houstonbikeways.org](http://www.houstonbikeways.org)

### City of Houston Bikeway Program

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